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Trump asks 60 leaders to join Gaza board

• White House confirms Rubio, WB's Banga, ex-UK PM Blair are members • Erdogan, Argentinian president invited; no word from FO if Pakistan also among invitees • Draft of charter doesn't mention Gaza, disparages UN role • Israel says board composition against its policy

WASHINGTON / ISLAMABAD: The United States has invited the heads of around 60 states to join President Donald Trump's Board of Peace, a body established with the stated purpose of managing Gaza's reconstruction.

However, the charter of the board, which does not mention Gaza by name, suggests that President Trump has begun to position it as a rival to the United Nations.

The document was sent to around 60 heads of state — including in Turkiye, Egypt, Argentina, Indonesia, Italy, Morocco, Britain, Germany, Canada and Australia — along with an invitation to join the board, said the independent Israeli outlet *Haaretz*, quoting several diplomatic sources.

The White House on Friday announced some board members, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio; Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff; Trump's son-in-law and former adviser Jared Kushner; Marc Rowan, CEO of Apollo Global Management, reportedly one of the largest private investment firms worldwide; World Bank Group President Ajay Banga; US Deputy National Security Adviser Robert Gabriel; and former British prime minister Tony Blair.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was also invited to sit at the board overnight on Saturday, his office said. According to a diplomatic source, the leaders of all three mediating countries — Egypt, Qatar and Turkiye — were invited to take part. Another diplomatic source confirmed that Argentinian President Javier Milei was also invited to join the board.

According to *Reuters*, the board also includes Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. Israel has repeatedly opposed any Turkish role in Gaza.

Other members of the executive board include Sigrid Kaag, the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process; an Israeli-Cypriot billionaire; and a minister from the United Arab Emirates, which established relations with Israel in 2020.

Gaza second phase: Editorial on Page 6

Diplomatic sources in Washington claimed that Pakistan had also received an invitation, but there was no official word from the Foreign Office in this regard.

At a press briefing earlier this week, when asked to comment on Steve Witkoff's announcement that the Gaza peace plan was entering Phase Two, FO spokesman Tahir Andrabi mentioned Pakistan's support for peace efforts in the Palestinian enclave.

"We take note of the announcement of the next phase of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and express the hope that these steps will lead to further stabilisation of the situation, and upscaling of the humanitarian assistance and an end to the suffering of the Palestinians," he said.

Trump's board

According to *Haaretz*, the document

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COPENHAGEN (Denmark): Demonstrators wave Greenlandic flags as they take part in a rally in the Danish capital to protest against US threats to take over Greenland.—AFP Report on Page 12

Pakistan slams profiling of mosques in held Kashmir

• FO calls reported move to collect financial, personal details of seminary teachers 'grave violation of religious freedom' • Says it is part of 'institutionalised Islamophobia driven by Hindutva ideology'

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday condemned the reported profiling of mosques and their management committees in India-occupied Kashmir, saying the "blatant intrusion into religious affairs constitutes a grave violation of the fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief".

The Foreign Office criticised the move in a statement after police in the occupied valley distributed forms to "collect" financial and personal details of mosques and seminaries, including mosque leaders and members of management committees, according to a report by *Hindustan Times*, which quoted local residents and Kashmiri leaders.

The action "reflects yet another coercive attempt to intimidate and marginalise the Muslim population of the occupied territory", the FO said.

The forms included sections requiring seminary teachers and mosque leaders to provide details of their "Aadhaar cards, bank accounts, property ownership, social media handles, passport, ration card, driving licence, SIM cards and mobile phone model along with the IMEI", *Hindustan Times* reported. It added that details regarding the "religious sect" of the mosques were also sought.

A lawmaker from Srinagar called it "an infringement of the religious freedom guaranteed under the Indian Constitution", saying the move aimed to "control religion and mosques", the report said.

"The forcible collection of personal details, photographs and sectarian affiliations of religious functionaries amounts to systematic harassment, aimed at instilling fear among worshippers and obstructing the free exercise of their faith," the FO statement read.

'Institutionalised Islamophobia'

"These actions form part of a broader pattern of institutionalised Islamophobia driven by the Hindutva ideology of the occupying Indian government," the statement said, adding that the "targeting of mosques lays bare the discriminatory and communal character of these policies".

The Foreign Office maintained that the "people of Jammu and Kashmir possess an inalienable right to practise their religion without fear, coercion or discrimination".

"Pakistan will continue to stand in solidarity with them and will persist in raising its voice against all forms of religious persecution and intolerance targeting Kashmiris," the statement said.

In November, United Nations experts sounded the alarm over "serious human rights violations" in occupied Kashmir by the Indian government.

40 samples test positive for poliovirus in December

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: As many as 40 environmental samples from all four provinces and the federal capital were found positive during the month of December.

According to an official of the polio laboratory located at the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, as many as 127 sewage samples from 87 districts were tested for the presence of poliovirus in December 2025. Of these, 87 samples tested negative, while 40 samples were found positive for poliovirus.

"As many as 23 samples were collected from Balochistan, of which 21 were found negative and two were found positive. A total of 34 samples were collected from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, of which 26 were negative and eight were found positive. From Punjab, 31 samples were collected, of which 25 were negative and six were positive. In Sindh, six samples were found negative and 23 were positive. In Islamabad, one out of five samples was found positive. However, five samples collected from Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan were found negative," the official said.

Replying to a question, the official explained that if the virus causing the

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Pakistan, US agree to boost security, border cooperation

• Naqvi meets American delegation led by Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker • Says Washington's advanced software to help curb 'financial fraud, terror financing'

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States on Saturday agreed to enhance collaboration in bilateral security and border management, as both sides signalled a broader push to deepen defence and law enforcement ties amid renewed engagement under President Donald Trump's administration.

The agreement was reached as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with a high-level US delegation led by US Charg d'Affaires Natalie Baker.

The meeting featured in-depth deliberation on boosting relations between the two countries and expanding cooperation in shared areas of interest.

It was mutually agreed to further strengthen existing cooperation with the US Anti-Terrorism Assistance Programme and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

The delegation also discussed training programmes for officers of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Federal Constabulary, and National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

Matters relating to the establishment of a centre for crime and an academy within the FIA with US support also came under review. It was also agreed that border security agencies, coastal guards, and other institutions would be equipped with modern US-supplied equipment.

Mr Naqvi stated that modern technology would enhance the capacity of border security agencies and coastal guards.

He also welcomed US assistance in the reorganisation of the Federal Constabulary and in strengthening the capabilities of the FIA and the NCCIA.

He added that US support in activating FIA's counterterrorism wing would prove highly beneficial, making it the first federal anti-terrorist wing with effective coordination with provinces.

Mr Naqvi said the NCCIA was carrying out an extensive crackdown on illegal call centres across the country.

Advanced software

He noted that advanced software was vital for preventing financial fraud and terror financing, and US cooperation with the NCCIA in this regard was highly significant.

He added that the advanced software would be used to identify individuals involved in crimes abroad.

The minister emphasised the need to further expand collaboration with Pakistani institutions. Meanwhile, the US delegation appreciated Pakistan's efforts to increase security cooperation and strengthen bilateral ties.

Ms Baker acknowledged the ongoing collaboration between the interior ministry and US agencies at various levels and reaffirmed that efforts would continue to further enhance the partnership with Pakistan.

Minister of State for Interior Talal

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Criticism of armed forces, judiciary 'unacceptable' in NA: speaker

Says only remarks within law, Constitution will be allowed

By Zulqernain Tahir

KARACHI: Statements against Pakistan, the judiciary or the armed forces would not be allowed on the floor of the National Assembly, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq said on Saturday.

"Be it [opposition leader] Mehmood Khan Achakzai or anyone else in the parliament if they speak against the country, I will stop them," Mr Sadiq said in a talk with journalists during his visit to the National College of Arts on Saturday.

"Negative or controversial remarks on the role of the judiciary, the armed forces of Pakistan and judges are unacceptable," he said. He further stated that any kind of remarks against the armed forces was "intolerable".

He further stated that only those remarks that fell within the ambit of the law and the Constitution would be allowed.

"Those who speak against Pakistan will not be allowed to express their views on the floor of the National Assembly," he was quoted as saying.

Mr Sadiq further asserted that as the National Assembly speaker, he would continue to play an impartial role.

He added that in a democratic society, protesting was a citizen's right. However, this protest should be peaceful and remain within the ambit of the law and the Constitution, he said.

"There is no room for arson, damage to life and property or vandalism," Mr Sadiq was quoted as saying, adding that the "use of sticks and weapons" was a threat to the rule of law.

The development comes a little over a month after Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan Nasar barred criticism of "national heroes" and political leadership in the upper house of parliament.

"You cannot speak against political heroes who embraced martyrdom, went into exile, worked for the nation and the country, conducted nuclear tests and made the nuclear bomb," he remarked just after finishing the day's agenda amid voices of dissent from the opposition benches.

He later vowed to enforce his ruling. In an informal conversation with media persons at the Parliament House, he made it clear that derogatory or disrespectful remarks against national heroes, whether from the armed forces, politics, judiciary or any national institution, cannot be tolerated within the House.

"Every member has the right to express views, but that right must be exercised within the constitutional framework, rules of procedure and established parliamentary traditions," he emphasised.

24 killed in Sargodha, Gwadar accidents

• Over 30 people injured in Ormara; seven moved to Karachi • Punjab CM seeks report after truck falls into canal due to dense fog

By Sajjad Abbas Niazi and Behram Baloch

SARGODHA / GWADAR: At least 24 people lost their lives and scores were wounded in two road accidents in Punjab and Balochistan on Saturday.

In Punjab's Sargodha district, 14 people were killed and nine were injured after the mini truck they were travelling in fell into a dried canal in the early hours of Saturday due to dense fog that had reduced visibility, while in Balochistan's Gwadar, a passenger vehicle overturned on the Coastal Highway in Ormara, killing 10 people and leaving over 30 wounded.

According to Punjab Rescue 1122 officials, the truck was travelling from Islamabad to Faisalabad with 23 people on board to attend a funeral. "Due to heavy fog, the motorway was closed, so the vehicle took a local route. In the area of Kot Momin tehsil, the truck fell from the Ghalapur bridge into the canal," said a statement from Rescue 1122, adding that the truck "lost control because of poor visibility".

The Rescue 1122 statement added that the canal was dry, but passengers were stuck beneath the truck when it overturned. Six children were among the dead.

The injured were provided first aid on site and were then taken to Civil Hospital Kot Momin, along with the bodies. Three of the injured were later shifted to Kot Momin Tehsil Headquarters Hospital.

It is pertinent to mention that there is a dangerous turn on the Ghalapur canal, but there is no lighting arrangement on the bridge to prevent any untoward incident. A few days ago, a vehicle fell into the same canal. During winter, dense fog paralyses traffic on Punjab's motorways and major thoroughfares, forcing road closures by the authorities to prevent accidents.

Earlier in the day, different sections of motorways, including the M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4 and M-11, were closed due to dense fog, according to the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP).

Balochistan accident

In Balochistan, the accident occurred when a passenger vehicle was en route from Karachi to Jiwani, with most passengers hailing from Sindh. The vehicle overturned on the highway at Hudd Goth near Gwadar's Ormara tehsil, killing 10 and leaving 35 injured. The driver lost control of the vehicle at a sharp turn after which the bus overturned.

The Balochistan chief minister has sought a report on the incident.

The Edhi rescue service said 10 individuals, including a girl, had died in the accident, adding a mobile morgue had been sent to Ormara to bring the bodies to Karachi.

Meanwhile, at least seven people, who were in critical condition, were moved to Karachi via a navy ship for treatment. Coastal Highway SP Aslam Bangulzai said the deceased hailed from various parts of Sindh and were going to Jiwani for labour. He added that the bodies and the injured were initially taken to PNS Darman Jah Hospital in Ormara.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti held a telephone conversation with Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah to discuss the accident, his office said on X. They exchanged details regarding the condition of the injured passengers and the medical treatment being provided to them. The CM instructed Gwadar Deputy Commissioner Naqeebullah Khan and other relevant authorities to ensure the "immediate shifting of the injured and timely completion of all administrative arrangements".

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif also expressed her deep grief over the loss of precious human lives in the Sargodha truck accident, state-run *APP* reported. She directed the commissioner to submit a detailed report on the circumstances leading to the accident and the measures taken for assistance.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed their deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the Sargodha and Ormara accidents, *Radio Pakistan* reported.

ON OTHER PAGES

Backdated levy on CPPs 'unlawful'

The Sindh High Court has declared that the collection of a levy imposed on gas supply to industrial captive power plants with retrospective effect was ultra vires the relevant law. The High Court also observed that the levy on captive power plants (CPPs) could not take effect immediately upon the promulgation of the law as the ordinance itself never determined the rate of the levy. **Page 9**

Low snowfall raises alarm in Gilgit-Baltistan

Gilgit-Baltistan faces a visible climate crisis as an unusual winter dry spell leaves mountains bare. While light snow recently fell in Skardu and Ghizer, residents say the season is months behind schedule. The GB Environmental Protection Agency warns that late snowfall will not compact into glacier ice, significantly increasing the risk of summer flash floods. **Page 12**

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